

ClaimsWhat is claimed is:

1. A system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices  
10 comprising:

a data peripheral system comprising at least one data input/output device;  
a secure data storage medium;  
allocation means adapted to allocate a selected storage area in the secure  
data storage medium;

15 data communication means adapted for communicating data from the at  
least one data input/output device into the selected storage area of secure data storage  
medium;

20 accounting means adapted for securing charge information from an  
associated user, which charge information allows for securing of payment for use of the  
data peripheral system;

verification means adapted for securing charge verification information  
corresponding to charge information received from the associated user; and

25 enabling means adapted for enabling operation of the data peripheral  
system in accordance with an output of the verification means so as to provide fee-based  
access of the associated user to the peripheral system.

30 2. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral  
devices of claim 1 further comprising means adapted for storing an access control list,  
which access control list dictates an identity of users authorized to access data stored in  
the selected storage area of the secure data storage medium.

3. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral  
devices of claim 1 further comprising means adapted for selectively de-allocating the  
selected storage area in the secure data storage medium after expiration of a preselected

5 duration.

4. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 1 wherein the data peripheral system includes at least one of a printer, facsimile, scanning device, character recognition system, and storage device.

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5. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 1 further comprising means adapted for selecting parameters for a selected data processing operation undertaken in connection with the data stored in the secure data storage medium.

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6. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 1 wherein the charge information includes information associated with at least one of a pre-paid debit card, coupon, and credit card.

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7. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 1 further comprising tracking means adapted for tracking the user's usage of the data peripheral system and cost generating means adapted for receiving an output from the tracking means and generating a cost for the user's usage of the data peripheral system.

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8. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 7 further comprising billing means adapted for receiving an output from the cost generating means and applying the output to the user's charge information.

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9. A method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices comprising the steps of:

- allocating a selected storage area in a secure data storage medium;
- communicating data from at least one data input/output device in a data peripheral system into the selected storage area of secure data storage medium;

5                   securing charge information from an associated user, which charge  
information allows for securing of payment for use the data peripheral system;  
                  securing charge verification information corresponding to charge  
information received from the associated user; and  
                  enabling operation of the data peripheral system in accordance with an  
10                  output of the verification means so as to provide fee-based access of the associated user to  
the peripheral system.

10.       The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral  
devices of claim 9 further comprising the step of storing an access control list, which  
15           access control list dictates an identity of users authorized to access data stored in the  
selected storage area of the secure data storage medium.

11.       The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral  
devices of claim 9 further comprising the step of selectively de-allocating the selected  
20           storage area in the secure data storage medium after expiration of a preselected duration.

12.       The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral  
devices of claim 9 wherein the data peripheral system includes at least one of a printer,  
facsimile, scanning device, character recognition system, and storage device.

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13.       The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral  
devices of claim 9 further comprising the step of selecting parameters for a selected data  
processing operation undertaken in connection with the data stored in the secure data  
storage medium.

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14.       The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral  
devices of claim 9 wherein the charge information includes information associated with at  
least one of a pre-paid debit card, coupon, and credit card.

5        15. The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 9 further comprising the step of tracking the user's usage of the data peripheral system and generating a cost for the user's usage of the data peripheral system.

10      16. The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 15 further comprising the step of applying the generated cost to the user's charge information.

15      17. A computer-readable medium for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices comprising:

15            a data peripheral system comprising at least one data input/output device; a secure data storage medium; allocation means adapted to allocate a selected storage area in the secure data storage medium;

20            data communication means adapted for communicating data from the at least one data input/output device into the selected storage area of secure data storage medium;

              accounting means adapted for securing charge information from an associated user, which charge information allows for securing of payment for use of the data peripheral system;

25            verification means adapted for securing charge verification information corresponding to charge information received from the associated user; and

              enabling means adapted for enabling operation of the data peripheral system in accordance with an output of the verification means so as to provide fee-based access of the associated user to the peripheral system.

30      18. The computer-readable medium for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 17 further comprising means adapted for storing an access control list, which access control list dictates an identity of users authorized to access data stored in the selected storage area of the secure data storage medium.

19. The computer-readable medium for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 17 further comprising means adapted for selectively deallocating the selected storage area in the secure data storage medium after expiration of a preselected duration.

20. The computer-readable medium for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 17 wherein the charge information includes information associated with at least one of a pre-paid debit card, coupon, and credit card.

21. The computer-readable medium for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 17 further comprising tracking means adapted for tracking the user's usage of the data peripheral system and cost generating means adapted for receiving an output from the tracking means and generating a cost for the user's usage of the data peripheral system.

22. The computer-readable medium for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 21 further comprising billing means adapted for receiving an output from the cost generating means and applying the output to the user's charge information.

23. A computer-implemented method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices comprising the steps of:

allocating a selected storage area in a secure data storage medium;

communicating data from at least one data input/output device in a data

peripheral system into the selected storage area of secure data storage medium;

securing charge information from an associated user, which charge information allows for securing of payment for use the data peripheral system;

securing charge verification information corresponding to charge information received from the associated user; and

5 enabling operation of the data peripheral system in accordance with an output of the verification means so as to provide fee-based access of the associated user to the peripheral system.

24. The computer-implemented method for providing fee-based access to  
10 shared data peripheral devices of claim 23 further comprising the step of storing an access  
control list, which access control list dictates an identity of users authorized to access data  
stored in the selected storage area of the secure data storage medium.

25. The computer-implemented method for providing fee-based access to  
15 shared data peripheral devices of claim 23 further comprising the step of selectively de-  
allocating the selected storage area in the secure data storage medium after expiration of a  
preselected duration.

26. The computer-implemented method for providing fee-based access to  
20 shared data peripheral devices of claim 23 wherein the charge information includes  
information associated with at least one of a pre-paid debit card, coupon, and credit card.

27. The computer-implemented method for providing fee-based access to  
shared data peripheral devices of claim 23 further comprising the step of tracking the  
25 user's usage of the data peripheral system and generating a cost for the user's usage of the  
data peripheral system.

28. The computer-implemented method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 27 further comprising the step of applying the generated cost to the user's charge information.